



THE INNOVATORS

IC 10

The 10 Most Innovative Legal Departments In Corporate America

The concept behind the InsideCounsel 10 is simple: We highlight 10 nuts-and-bolts solutions that innovative legal departments have developed to solve the common problems facing the in-house bar. Over the past six months, we have collected hundreds of interesting stories about how legal departments are confronting issues such as using technology to deliver more efficient legal services, minimizing the threat of litigation and protecting the company's products from counterfeiters. In selecting among those stories, we strove to pick solutions that most departments—large or small—could implement without huge start-up costs or radical changes in the way they do business. For those solutions that require a small initial investment, the IC-10 provides you with one important negotiation tool to secure those funds: living proof that the idea works.



CREDIT SUISSE

SCHOLARLY PURSUITS

Credit Suisse's law library wasn't exactly the legal department's most shining accomplishment 10 years ago. However, when former General Counsel Joseph McLaughlin took over the department in June 1997, he changed all of that by hiring Nathan Rosen as the in-house law librarian.

"The whole department was acting very inefficiently, and they were operating with inadequate information to respond quickly and efficiently to the front office," says Rosen, company vice president in legal and compliance.

When starting his new post as Credit Suisse's GC, McLaughlin—who left the company in 2002 to join Heller Ehrman—immediately noticed that the department was wasting a lot of money by farming out legal questions to outside counsel. When auditing attorney bills, he found that his staff was asking the same questions to different firms. But the inefficiency wasn't completely the attorneys' fault.

"There was no library, there were no online databases, there were no books, there was no Intranet, and there was no continuing education program," Rosen says. After an initial evaluation, Rosen, a former litigator, approached McLaughlin and told him that building an internal library would be expensive, but worth the investment. McLaughlin was quick to give Rosen the green light, and Rosen didn't waste any time.

Rosen attacked the process in increments, initially selecting 10 books he considered useful to the department then asking attorneys to vote on the selections. If enough people voted on an individual title, he bought it.

"The most important thing in creating a successful library is to ask the lawyers what it is they want," says Manuel Alvarez, director and counsel at Credit Suisse, who works closely with Rosen. "Make up a wish list and then within the budget constraints put together a quality product that hits on as many of those wishes as possible."

Not only did this incremental process reduce the immediate economic impact of building a collection, but it also gave Rosen a chance to talk to each attorney on an individual basis and hone in on the attorney's needs. This enabled Rosen to transform Credit Suisse's legal library from bare bones to a sophisticated nexus of information that is directly targeted to the attorney's work. Today, the library hosts 800 titles, including about 80 periodicals. However, Rosen didn't stop at books.

Rosen makes a point to sit in on the meetings of practice groups to hear about their current concerns. At the end of the meetings, he gives a short talk about a source relevant to the practice group, tying the library's resources directly to their interests.

Rosen also educates the department's lawyers by having a representative from each practice group teach the department



Nathan Rosen

PHOTOGRAPH BY JILL WACHTER

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about what the practice group does. This approach, Rosen says, increases the department's efficiency.

"It really helps to interconnect teams," Rosen says. "Sometimes someone down the hall may have the answer."

Rosen plays a central role in building those connections—he is one of the first people new attorneys meet as well as the last person they talk to. Rosen conducts exit surveys that enable him know what resources the department lacks.

Although it is impossible to say exactly how much money the library has saved the company, Rosen says the fact there still remains a "wow factor" surrounding people's impression of the library is enough for him to judge its worth.

"You call outside counsel, spend thousands of dollars and you get a stock answer," Rosen says. "We are able to give them what they want in value added format, now we have an intellectual roadmap to use to go quickly through that data."

—Julie Miller